



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

**Region 6
1445 Ross Avenue, Suite 1200
Dallas, TX 75202-2733**

SEP 08 2011

Mr. Gary D. Goeke
Chief, Environmental Assessment Section
Leasing and Environment (MS 5410)
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management,
Regulation and Enforcement (BOEMRE)
Gulf of Mexico (GOM) Region
1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard
New Orleans, LA 70133-2394

Dear Mr. Goeke:

In accordance with our responsibilities under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing NEPA, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 6 office in Dallas, Texas, has completed its review of the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS) prepared by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Ocean and Energy Management (BOEMRE), Gulf of Mexico Outer Continental Shelf Region for the Western Planning Area Lease Sale 218.

EPA Region 6 provided comments on the Draft Supplemental EIS dated June 6, 2011. EPA rated the DEIS as "EC 2," i.e., EPA had "Environmental Concerns to the Proposed Actions and Requested Additional Information." EPA is pleased that the FSEIS includes additional analysis of the proposed action to address these concerns. We have enclosed some additional detailed comments for your consideration and incorporation into the Record of Decision Document.

EPA appreciates the opportunity to review the FSEIS. If you have any questions, please contact Mike Jansky of my staff at (214) 665-7451 or by e-mail at jansky.michael@epa.gov for assistance.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rhonda Smith", is written over the typed name.

Rhonda M. Smith, Chief
Office of Planning and
Coordination

Enclosure

**DETAILED COMMENTS
ON THE
FINAL SUPPLEMENT TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
FOR THE
GULF OF MEXICO OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF REGION
WESTERN PLANNING AREA
LEASE SALE 218**

Our review of the Final Supplement to the EIS (FSEIS) responses to EPA's comments provided on the Draft Supplement are determined to have adequately addressed our concerns regarding impacts from catastrophic oil and gas drilling accident. The expanded and clearer explanation on how BOEMRE addressed incomplete and unavailable information is now provided in Section 4.1 and Appendix B.

The FSEIS corrected a portion of the errors EPA identified, particularly with respect to issues related to beneficial use of dredged material. However, the statement in Section 3.3.3 (Dredged Material Disposal, paragraph 2, sentence 3) regarding dredged material disposal sites along the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW) near the border between Louisiana and Mississippi remains incorrect. The dredged material disposal sites along the GIWW and numbered 66, 65A, 65B, and 65C are not Ocean Dredged Material Disposal Sites (ODMDS). Those open water disposal sites are among those regulated under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and are managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The separate group of sites listed in Table 3-13 are the only ODMDS. Those sites are regulated under the Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act and are managed by the Environmental Protection Agency.